



1783

Selections
from
Cincinnati Fourteen

Volume 2

The Society of the Cincinnati Eagle

The Society of the Cincinnati







Selections from *Cincinnati Fourteen*

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The Society of the Cincinnati Eagle

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The seal of the Society of the Cincinnati is centered on the page. It features an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield contains a landscape with a river, a bridge, and a building. Above the eagle's head is a laurel wreath. The entire seal is rendered in a light, faded green color.

Cincinnati *Fourteen*

1783

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How the Eagle Came to Be the Symbol of the Society

Some members may be surprised to learn that the principal symbol of the Society—the eagle—is not mentioned in the Institution. In fact, the Institution, as adopted on May 13, 1783, specifies “a medal of gold” (implying a round or oval flat object) and describes in detail the imagery of the life of Cincinnatus and Latin mottos that each side of the medal would bear.

Soon after the adjournment of the May 13 meeting, General Steuben, who was acting as president *pro tem* of the Society, asked Maj. Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, a French volunteer with the Army Corps of Engineers, to design the Society's insignia as described in the Institution. In his letter of reply, dated June 10, 1783, Major L'Enfant enclosed designs for the obverse and reverse of the medal as requested, but politely suggested to Steuben that “a medal ... is considered, in the different states of Europe, only as the reward of the laborer and the artist” or as ornamentation for “mountebanks, dancers and musicians.” “A gentleman already invested with any European Order,” the major wrote, “would be unwilling to carry a medal.”

L'Enfant went on in his letter to propose an order, or badge, that he considered more fitting for the stature of the Society. He submitted two designs, both based on the form of a bald eagle, which he chose because it is a species “peculiar to the continent.” In one design the eagle supported a thirteen-pointed star at the center of which was a medallion bearing the Cincinnatus motif of the medal. The other design, which he personally recommended, was simpler: “the eagle, supporting on his breast the figure of the medal, with the legend in his claws and about the neck.” L'Enfant enclosed with his letter two *essais* or sample sketches to



Maj. Pierre-Charles L'Enfant's sketches as submitted in 1783 to General Steuben, who, acting as president pro tem of the Society, had asked L'Enfant, a French volunteer with the Army Corps of Engineers, to design the Society's insignia as described in the Institution; instead, L'Enfant proposed two designs that he considered more fitting for the stature of the Society.



Medal design—obverse. And reverse.

illustrate his proposals. He suggested that the eagles would be best manufactured in France, where, he felt, the artisans were superior to those in America. If a medal were also to be struck, L'Enfant recommended that it be made of silver and be distributed to all members of the Society along with a “diploma of parchment” on which the insignia would be engraved.

At their next meeting, held on June 19, 1783, the members of the Society resolved “that the bald eagle, carrying the emblems on its breast, be established as the order of the Society, and that the ideas of Major L'Enfant, respecting it and the manner of its being worn by the members, be adopted.” They also accepted the proposal for the silver medal and diploma, adding that “anything in the original Institution, respecting gold medals, to the contrary notwithstanding.” The resolution directed that Major L'Enfant's original design for the eagle, certified by General Steuben, be deposited into the Society's archives, where it remains, along with his sketches for the medal and diploma, among the earliest records of the Society's founding.

Ellen McCallister Clark
Library Director

Sources: Pierre-Charles L'Enfant's letter to General Steuben, June 10, 1783 (written in French) is in the Society archives. The excerpts used here are taken from an English translation published in Edgar Erskine Hume, *General Washington's Correspondence concerning the Society of the Cincinnati* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), pp. 11-13. The silver medal, though adopted at the June 19, 1783, meeting, was never struck in the eighteenth century. For a more comprehensive account of the history of the Eagle, see Minor Myers Jr., *The Insignia of the Society of the Cincinnati* (Washington, D.C.: The Society of the Cincinnati, 1998).

The seal of the Society of the Cincinnati is centered on the page. It features an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield contains a landscape with a river, a bridge, and a building. Above the eagle's head is a laurel wreath. The entire seal is rendered in a light blue color that matches the background.

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The Cincinnati Eagle at 225

This May is the 225th anniversary of the delivery of the first Society insignia—better known as the Eagle—to George Washington and the other members gathered in Philadelphia.

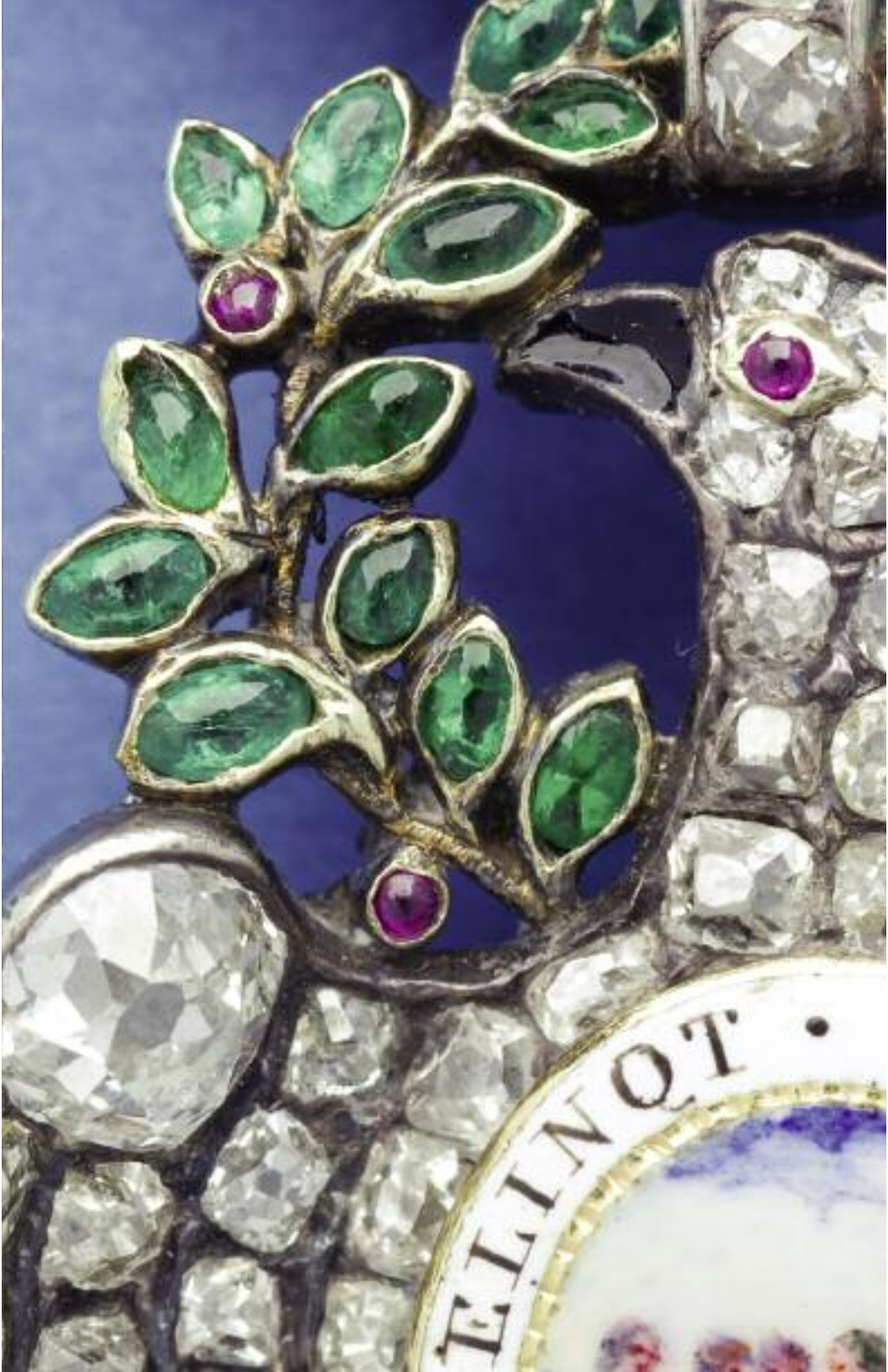
The Institution, adopted in the summer of 1783, called for members to wear a round gold medal with scenes from the life of Cincinnatus on both sides. Major Pierre L'Enfant persuaded the Society's founders to abandon this idea in favor of a badge in the form of an eagle, with the design planned for the medal placed as a miniature medallion on the eagle's breast.

L'Enfant produced several watercolor sketches of his design, which were used to secure orders from original members. Then he sailed for France, where he had the first group of Eagles manufactured. The work was completed with remarkable speed. L'Enfant was back in Philadelphia with the first Eagles in early May 1784, in time to present them to members attending the first general meeting.

The Eagle is the result of an unplanned collaboration between Henry Knox, who conceived the design for the medal, L'Enfant, who translated Knox's design into a medallion on the breast of an eagle, and Nicolas Jean Francastel, the gifted French goldsmith who translated L'Enfant's design into a three-dimensional work of art.

To mark this anniversary, we present a series of special articles on our Society's most familiar symbol.







DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

by Emily L. Schulz, deputy director and curator, and Lindsay Borst, museum collections manager

Two hundred and twenty-five years ago, George Washington received a spectacular bejeweled Eagle at The Society of the Cincinnati's first general meeting in May 1784—a surprise gift that would become the badge of the office of president general. Made in Paris using precious stones mined on two continents half a world away, the Diamond Eagle, as it came to be called, is an extraordinary representation of the Society's insignia. It has since become a symbol of the Society itself.

Pierre L'Enfant, a French-born artist and military engineer, designed the Society's insignia, known as the Eagle, in the early summer of 1783. Full of enthusiasm for his adopted

country—he even Americanized his name to “Peter” around this time—L'Enfant was determined to create a distinctive badge for the new Society. After Society leaders commissioned him to have the first gold

*“My little token nautically presented will acquire some value since it will be placed in the buttonhole of General Washington”
—Admiral d’Estaing*



George Washington's letter of credentials for Pierre L'Enfant as a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, October 16, 1783. The Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

Eagles made from his design, In the fall of he sailed from Philadelphia aboard the *George Washington*, a naval vessel bound for France (L'Enfant shared passage with John Paul Jones). On December 8, 1783, he arrived at Le Havre on the northwest coast of France.¹ L'Enfant traveled immediately to Paris—the only place that he believed had craftsmen skilled enough to produce an enameled gold insignia of the highest quality—with

orders for Eagles from some American members, including George Washington. L'Enfant also intended to have Eagles made as gifts for potential French members and to sell to other members upon returning to America. No written evidence has been found demonstrating that L'Enfant's plans included the Diamond Eagle.

It is not clear when the Diamond Eagle was commissioned, but it was likely early in L'Enfant's trip so that craftsmen would have enough time to complete the job before L'Enfant returned to America in the spring. The commission for the Diamond Eagle was awarded to the firm of Duval and Francastel, which would make most, if not all, of the other Eagles that L'Enfant ordered in 1784. Claude Jean Autran Duval cast the Eagles while Nicolas Jean Francastel, the more experienced goldsmith of the pair, finished the intricate hand carving work, which is particularly evident on the reverse of the Diamond Eagle.² How the Diamond Eagle

was paid for remains a mystery. L'Enfant's account of his expenses in France related to the Society's insignia—prepared for the May 1784 general meeting—does not include the Diamond Eagle. Similarly, the few documents that survive from the goldsmith Francastel, who wrote to the Society in 1786 attempting to secure payment for the Eagles, do not mention the Diamond Eagle specifically.³

Who commissioned the Diamond Eagle? It appears that the Eagle was at least partially complete by mid-February 1784, when Charles Hector, comte d'Estaing, the newly elected president of the French branch of the Society, wrote to the former French ambassador Anne César, chevalier de La Luzerne, about its manufacture. In the letter, dated February 18, d'Estaing describes his knowledge of the Diamond Eagle: "Learning by chance that an Eagle set with diamonds had been made for General Washington, I won over the jeweler. I obtained this Cincinnatus; I had a trophy and a banderole added, saying thereon that it was presented to *His Excellency General Washington by French sailors*. ... My little token nautically presented will acquire some value since it will be placed in the buttonhole of General Washington."⁴ It would seem, from this account, that d'Estaing was not aware of the initial commissioning of the Eagle, whose design appears to have originally included only the Eagle body, with the elaborate diamond trophy and enamel inscription above the body added later at d'Estaing's request. How and when d'Estaing learned of the existence of this diamond-encrusted eagle, whether just prior to writing to La Luzerne in February or weeks or even months earlier, is uncertain.

If d'Estaing, the president of the French Society and highest ranking French naval officer of the Revolution, was not involved in commissioning the Diamond Eagle, who led the effort to have it made? It is possible that L'Enfant, who liberally ordered scores more Eagles than the Society authorized, was intimately involved

in the creation of the Diamond Eagle. In a letter updating Washington on his progress in Paris in December 1783, L'Enfant mentions having visited the homes of French officers to encourage their interest in the

"It is in the name of all the French Sailors," d'Estaing wrote, "that I take the Liberty to request Your Excellency to accept of an American Eagle, expressed rather than embellished by a French Artist."



Design for the Society Eagle by Pierre L'Enfant, 1783, watercolor on paper. The Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

Society.⁵ L'Enfant may have gotten the idea for a more elaborate Eagle for Washington—or been encouraged by his fellow Frenchman to have one made—during those visits.

It is also possible that the marquis de Lafayette, the heroic French general and beloved friend to Washington, had a role in the creation of the Diamond Eagle. Washington, while informing Lafayette of L'Enfant's visit to France, wrote: "Major L'Enfant ... has undertaken to get the Order of the society executed in France. He has directions to deliver you one of the first that are compleated, and you will please also call on Him for as many as You may want."⁶ With this authorization from

Washington, Lafayette may have worked with L'Enfant to have a diamond insignia made to honor their former commander in chief. The beginning of d'Estaing's February 18, 1784, letter to La Luzerne suggests Lafayette's involvement: "The sojourn of M. L'Enfant was several times prolonged but my own part was delayed. I hope that my requests and their motives might be entrusted to Major L'Enfant. His mission had its difficulties. This is explained by the way he worked and by the influence of the advice of the Marquis de La Fayette."⁷ D'Estaing may be alluding to his own efforts to secure membership in the Society for French naval officers, but he also may be alluding to the Diamond Eagle. If the Eagle was ultimately the result of an unplanned collaboration between L'Enfant, Lafayette and d'Estaing, it



*Detail of the banderole
Admiral d'Estaing had
added, presenting the
Diamond Eagle to
George Washington on
behalf of French sailors.*



The seldom-seen reverse side of the Diamond Eagle.

was likely inspired by reverence for Washington, expressed by d’Estaing in a letter to the former commander in chief in December 1783: “Our common friend, the Marquis de la Fayette, and I talk frequently of you. ... We many times repeat to each other that among the celebrated men whom antiquity boasts of, none have performed actions of such difficulty and importance as those which you just so gloriously terminated.”⁸

However it was originally created, the Diamond Eagle ultimately became the gift of French sailors, led by d'Estaing. In late February 1784, d'Estaing penned the letter that would accompany the Eagle to America. "It is in the name of all the French Sailors," d'Estaing writes to Washington, "that I take the Liberty to request Your Excellency to accept of an American Eagle, *expressed rather than embellished* by a French Artist."⁹ The likely motive for the French sailors' gift—aside from their personal sentiments regarding Washington—was to advance their case for membership in the Society. The Society's Institution was vague about the membership of a potential French branch of the Society. The document acknowledged that Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, and "the Generals and Colonels" of the French army would be considered members of the Society, but named only six senior officers of the French navy as members.¹⁰ Many Frenchmen who were already involved with the Society found the inconsistency puzzling, if not offensive. D'Estaing was "mortified" at the slight; Lafayette considered it "Impolitic;" and L'Enfant branded it "prejudicial."¹¹ At the organizing meeting of the French Society on January 16, 1784, L'Enfant took it upon himself to accept French naval officers' claims to membership and distribute Eagles to them, although no official word from America had come.¹²

While d'Estaing's February 1784 letter does not give a specific reason for the gift of the Diamond Eagle, he emphasizes that the Eagle symbolizes the French forces' role in the American fight for liberty: "The efforts of a patriot army were irresistible, Seconded by the King's Troops, who have shewn themselves by their discipline and conduct, worthy of the choice of His Majesty, his Navy has made every thing possible." D'Estaing concludes by entreating Washington to accept the Diamond Eagle with the "Sentiments of the most profound admiration and attachment."¹³

L'Enfant returned to America in the spring of 1784, departing France on March 16 and arriving in New York on April 29—a journey of forty-three days.¹⁴ He then traveled to Philadelphia in time to present the Diamond Eagle to Washington on May 11, 1784, during the Society's first general meeting. Washington's acceptance of the extraordinary gift—much more elaborate than the Eagle that he had ordered for himself—was, in part, a political decision. The Society had been embroiled in controversy since L'Enfant's departure. Its critics charged that the new organization was intended to establish an American aristocracy like the British one that had just been overthrown.

The Diamond Eagle, coupled with the news that King Louis XVI had decreed his approval of the Society and his permission for French officers to wear the Eagle on their uniforms, carried with it the weight of French enthusiasm for the Society that made it all but impossible to disband the fledgling brotherhood.¹⁵ Indeed, d'Estaing confided to La Luzerne in February 1784 that “this trifle can neither displease nor embarrass, nor can it be refused since it is offered in the name of all my comrades.”¹⁶ And so Washington replied to d'Estaing on May 15, thanking him and his French brethren for the “absolutely inestimable” gift.¹⁷ The May General Society meeting also clarified the membership question regarding French naval officers. On May 17, Washington wrote to d'Estaing, declaring that “All the Admirals and Captains of the Navy, ranking as Colonels, who have co'operated with the Armies of the United States’—are literally included, and it is the expectation also of the Society that it will effectually comprehend all the Officers of the French Navy who have been particularly recommended by your Excellency.”¹⁸

With 160 diamonds of various sizes and cuts, 28 marquis-shaped emeralds, 10 rubies, gold, silver, and enamel, creating the Diamond Eagle was no small task. Neither was examining it, a task that was recently undertaken by Lynne Loube, a master gemologist specializing in antique jewelry. Her thorough assessment of the Eagle resulted in a report detailing the cut, clarity, carat weight, and possible origins of each of its 198 stones as well as the methods used in its creation.¹⁹ Her study sheds new light on the history of one of the Society's most precious objects.

During the late eighteenth century, diamonds and other precious stones were in relatively short supply. Given the short amount of time French jewelers had to create the Diamond Eagle—L'Enfant was in France for three and a half months—it is possible that some of the diamonds used in the Eagle may have come directly from the stores of Louis XVI, who had signaled his approval of the Society in mid-December 1783. The larger and whiter diamonds in the Eagle appear to have originated in Golconda, India, while the smaller, off-color diamonds were probably mined in Brazil. India was the chief source of diamonds used in European jewelry in the early modern era. Brazilian diamonds had only recently entered the market when the Diamond Eagle was made. Diamonds from southern Africa, which now dominate the diamond market, were then unknown. A relatively rare and previously unknown feature of the Diamond Eagle is the large number of fluorescent diamonds, which glow in various colors when exposed to long

George Washington wears a Society eagle in this portrait attributed to John Ramage, ca. 1789, watercolor on ivory. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

wave ultraviolet light. The Eagle includes a total of thirty-five fluorescent diamonds ranging in color from bright yellow to pale green and blue.

L'Enfant undoubtedly provided Duval and Francastel with his watercolor sketch of the Eagle, with particular attention given to the body and the enameled medallions. The Parisian firm may have also referred to the first batch of forty-five Eagles they made for French officers in January 1784, as the crest at the back of the head on the Diamond Eagle also appears on some of these earliest Eagles, but not on the larger, better-known batches of Eagles that the firm would make in later months.

Appearing on both sides of the Eagle's breast are the two well-known medallions depicting Cincinnatus, but the enamel work of these scenes on the Diamond Eagle is the most detailed and artistic of any known Society Eagle. The medallion on the front depicts three Roman senators presenting a sword to Cincinnatus and is surrounded by the Society's Latin motto, "OMNIA . RELINQT . SERVAT . REMPB," which translates to, "He left all to serve the republic." In the medallion on the back, Cincinnatus returns home and the surrounding lettering reads, "VIRT . PRAEM . SOCI . CIN. RUM . INST . A.D. 1783," meaning "The reward of virtue / The Society of the Cincinnati / Founded 1783." The inscription on the white enamel banner on the back of the trophy—the part d'Estaing described as a "banderole"—memorializes the ultimate purpose for the Eagle: "Donated in the name of the french sailors to His Excellency the General Washington."





The trophy at the top of the Diamond Eagle is densely symbolic.

The symbolism incorporated into the almost-round trophy section connecting the Eagle to the ribbon is unique to this piece, although its inspiration is not yet entirely known. What at first appears to be a random and merely decorative assortment of diamonds becomes, upon closer inspection, a well-thought-out assemblage of military objects that represent the ties between the United States and France that helped to achieve American independence. Two unfurled flags dominate the left and right sides of the top of the trophy. A poppy flower, a symbol of death or sleep, appears between the two flags as a possible tribute to the soldiers and sailors who gave their lives during the Revolutionary War. The head of a rooster, poking out below the left flag, is as well-known symbol of France, much as the eagle represents the United States.

Towards the bottom of the trophy, on the right and left sides, two large, cushion-cut diamonds with tiers of small, square diamonds form epaulets with fringe. The ends of two cannon angle beneath the epaulets, formed by two square French-cut diamonds and several small round diamonds.

The trophy is connected to the Eagle body with a small, vertical, diamond-covered loop. The diamonds in the trophy and body of the Eagle are mounted in silver cups backed with gold. Most of the stones in the head, tail, and wings are channel set, meaning that they are held in place with a metal rim, or channel, attaching the top edge of the stone to the cup. This technique was used more often in the eighteenth century for setting paste, or glass, jewelry—an entirely different specialty than working with precious stones or gold. The diamonds in the wings were chosen specifically to create the appearance of feathers and the sizes were selected to give the impression of tapered wings. The wreath and branches grasped in the Eagle's talons are comprised of emeralds and rubies set in gold.

Evidence identified in the physical examination of the Eagle suggests that more than one hand may have been involved in its creation. The setting techniques and quality of workmanship vary among the stones on the trophy and the body of the Eagle, indicating that two separate jewelers may have set the stones. The silver settings around many of the diamonds are tighter and cleaner than the gold settings around the emeralds and rubies, leading to the possibility that an apprentice or less experienced jeweler set the colored stones. The silver and gold work on the back of the Eagle is extremely fine and exhibits a different type of specialty from the set stones on the front. Duval and Francastel, historically credited with creating the entire Eagle, most likely executed the fine enamel and metal work on the Eagle's medallions and reverse but may have asked one or more different craftsmen—perhaps even a jeweler more used to working with paste than precious stones—to set the stones on the front of the Eagle.

The symbolism incorporated into the trophy includes a well-thought-out assemblage of military objects that represent the ties between the United States and France.

The Diamond Eagle was originally suspended from a long, silk, blue-and-white ribbon that was attached to the piece before it left Paris. A folded, shorter piece of ribbon was fed horizontally through a silver

The Diamond Eagle resting on its original box.



loop adorned with diamonds at the bottom of the long ribbon. At the top of the long ribbon, the original metal clasp—consisting of a horizontal bar and ring—allowed Washington to secure the Eagle through a buttonhole on the left side of his coat. It was likely presented in what is said to be the original, red morocco case, a somewhat triangular-shaped hinged box in which the Eagle fit with the top and sides of its ribbon folded.²⁰



Despite the significance and beauty of the Diamond Eagle, Washington appears to have worn it only on very special occasions. Aside from the few times when he may have worn it in his official capacity as president general of the Society, the only event at which he regularly wore the Diamond Eagle was his annual birthday ball. In 1797 Henrietta Liston, wife of the British minister to the new nation, observed Washington wearing his blue-and-buff Continental Army uniform with “the Cross of Cincinnatus at his breast in diamonds.”²¹ Two artists, John Ramage and Edward Savage, painted portraits of Washington from life in which he wears a Society Eagle, but none of the portraits shows the insignia closely enough to determine if it is the Diamond Eagle.

When Washington died on December 14, 1799, the Diamond Eagle was among his personal possessions at Mount Vernon.²² His widow, Martha, had the Eagle sent to Alexander Hamilton, who was elected the following year as successor to Washington as president general of the Society. Hamilton’s term of office was cut short in 1804, when he died from wounds sustained in a duel with fellow

In 1797 the wife of the British ambassador observed Washington wearing his Continental Army uniform with “the Cross of Cincinnatus at his breast in diamonds.”

Society member Aaron Burr. When South Carolinian Charles Cotesworth Pinckney was elected the third president general in 1805, Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton forwarded the Diamond Eagle to him, just as Martha Washington had sent it to General Washington’s successor five years earlier. Inspired by this “testimonial of respect for the immortal Washington,” Pinckney came to con-

sider the Diamond Eagle, which had been privately owned by the first three presidents general, as the rightful property of the Society itself. Pinckney donated the Diamond Eagle to the Society on August 8, 1811.²³ Each of the men who have followed Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney in the office of president general have worn the Diamond Eagle, a treasured symbol of the bonds between the Revolutionary War soldiers and sailors who won American independence that continue between their descendants in the Society today.

1 L'Enfant would not have left America until after October 30, 1783, the date of a letter from Washington to the Frenchman transmitting \$250 for the procurement of eight Eagles for the commander in chief. His arrival in France was noted in the December 23, 1783, issue of *La Gazette de France*. For translations of these documents, see Edgar Erskine Hume, ed., *General Washington's Correspondence concerning The Society of the Cincinnati* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), 30, 34-35. For a description of L'Enfant's commission and trip to France in 1783-1784, see Minor Myers Jr., *The Insignia of The Society of the Cincinnati* (Washington, D.C.: The Society of the Cincinnati, 1998), 12-20.

2 Myers, *Insignia*, 14-15.

3 Pierre L'Enfant, "Account of the several matters created in France relating to the Cincinnati," [1784], The Society of the Cincinnati Archives; Nicolas Jean Francastel to "Le Marquis," January 19, 1786, The Society of the Cincinnati Archives. Several letters by or about Francastel are also in the Gilder Lehrman Collection of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

4 Charles Hector, comte d'Estaing, to Anne César, chevalier de La Luzerne, February 18, 1784, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 82.

The letter, originally written in French, is published in this book only in English, using Hume's own translation.

5 L'Enfant to George Washington, December 25, 1783, The Society of the Cincinnati Archives. The Society Archives include both the original French letter and an English translation, which may have been done at the time of the May 1784 General Society meeting.

6 Washington to Marie-Joseph Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette, October 30, 1783, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 29.

7 D'Estaing to La Luzerne, February 18, 1784, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 81-82.

8 D'Estaing to Washington, December 25, 1783, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 39.

9 D'Estaing to Washington, February 26, 1784, W.W. Abbot, ed., in *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 158.

10 Institution of The Society of the Cincinnati, May 13, 1783, The Society of the Cincinnati Archives. The six French naval officers are La Luzerne; d'Estaing; Conrad-Alexandre Gérard; François-Joseph-Paul de Grasse, comte de Grasse Tilly; Jacques-Melchior, comte de Barras-Saint-Laurent; and Charles-René-Dominique Sochet Destouches.

11 D'Estaing to Washington, December 25, 1783, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 40; Lafayette to Washington, March 9, 1784, in *Papers of Washington*, Confederation Series, 1:184; and L'Enfant to Washington, April 29, 1784, The Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

12 For more on the founding and history of the French Society, see Minor Myers Jr., *Liberty without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati*, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), chapter 7.

13 D'Estaing to Washington, February 26, 1784, in *Papers of Washington*, Confederation Series, 1:159.

14 L'Enfant to Washington, April 29, 1784, The Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

15 For more information on the controversy surrounding the founding of the Society, see the various printings of Aedanus Burke's 1783 pamphlet *Considerations On the Society or Order Of Cincinnati*, as well as the only modern full-length study of the controversy, Markus Hünemörder's *The Society of the Cincinnati: Conspiracy and Distrust in Early America* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

16 D'Estaing to La Luzerne, February 18, 1784, in Hume, *Washington's Correspondence*, 82.

17 Washington to d'Estaing, May 15, 1784, in *Papers of Washington*, Confederation Series, 1:159-160.

18 Washington to d'Estaing, May 17, 1784, in *Papers of Washington*, Confederation Series, 1:365. Washington wrote similar letters on the same day to Lafayette and La Luzerne.

19 This tally of a total of 198 precious stones in the Diamond Eagle revises the previously cited number of 194 that appears in Minor Myers' book on the insignia (page 18) and other sources.

20 Edgar Erskine Hume, "General George Washington's Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati," *The Numismatist* 46, no. 12 (December 1933): 749-759.

21 Henrietta Liston to James Jackson, February 24 [?], 1797, in Bradford Perkins, "A Diplomat's Wife in Philadelphia: Letters of Henrietta Liston, 1796-1800," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 6, no. 4 (October 1954): 608.

22 The Diamond Eagle was valued at \$387 in an 1810 inventory of Mount Vernon, Inventory of the Contents of Mount Vernon, 1810 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1909), 13.21 Henrietta Liston to James Jackson, February 24 [?], 1797, in Bradford Perkins, "A Diplomat's Wife in Philadelphia: Letters of Henrietta Liston, 1796-1800," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 6, no. 4 (October 1954): 608.

23 Myers, *Liberty*, 199-200; Proceedings of The General Society of the Cincinnati, 1784-1884 (Philadelphia: Review Printing House, 1887), 72.

AN EAGLE EARNED

*The New Washington-Lafayette Eagle
for Service of High Distinction*



Shortly after our Society was formed in 1783, its leaders dispatched Pierre L'Enfant to Paris to have the first Eagle insignia of the Society manufactured. Before he left, General Washington asked L'Enfant to have an Eagle of a special design manufactured exclusively for him. Having accepted the position of president general, Washington felt that he ought to have a special badge. L'Enfant returned to America in 1784, bringing the original Eagles with him from France, along with the special Eagle Washington had commissioned. The Eagle on Washington's special badge was surrounded with a laurel wreath as a tribute to his distinction in the Society.

Washington treasured this Eagle for the remainder of his life. After his death it became the possession of his favorite step-granddaughter, Nelly Custis. In 1824 she presented Washington's special Eagle to the marquis de Lafayette, who had been like a son to Washington. Lafayette treasured the Eagle, and it became a part of his patrimony. The Washington-Lafayette Eagle is connected to two of the greatest heroes of our War for Independence and is a symbol of the friendship between American and French members of our Society.

In 2008 the General Society commissioned the production of a new Eagle inspired by the original once owned by Washington and Lafayette. This Eagle will not be sold. It is to be presented to men who have served our Society with the highest distinction. It is to be The Society of the Cincinnati's medal of honor, and is to be known as the Washington-Lafayette Eagle for Service of High Distinction to The Society of the Cincinnati.

Like the Diamond Eagle, which is the property of the Society and passes from president general to present general, the Washington-Lafayette Eagles will remain the property of the Society, to be worn by their recipients for the remainder of their lives, and then to come back to the Society, and in due course to be presented to other men who have served with high distinction. In time each medal will come to have a history of its own, and its association with men of great distinction in the life of our Society will add luster to each presentation for decades, even centuries, to come.

The first of these new Eagles was presented to Catesby Brooke Jones of the Virginia Society at the banquet concluding the 225th Anniversary Convocation in Washington in September 2008. Catesby Jones, the son

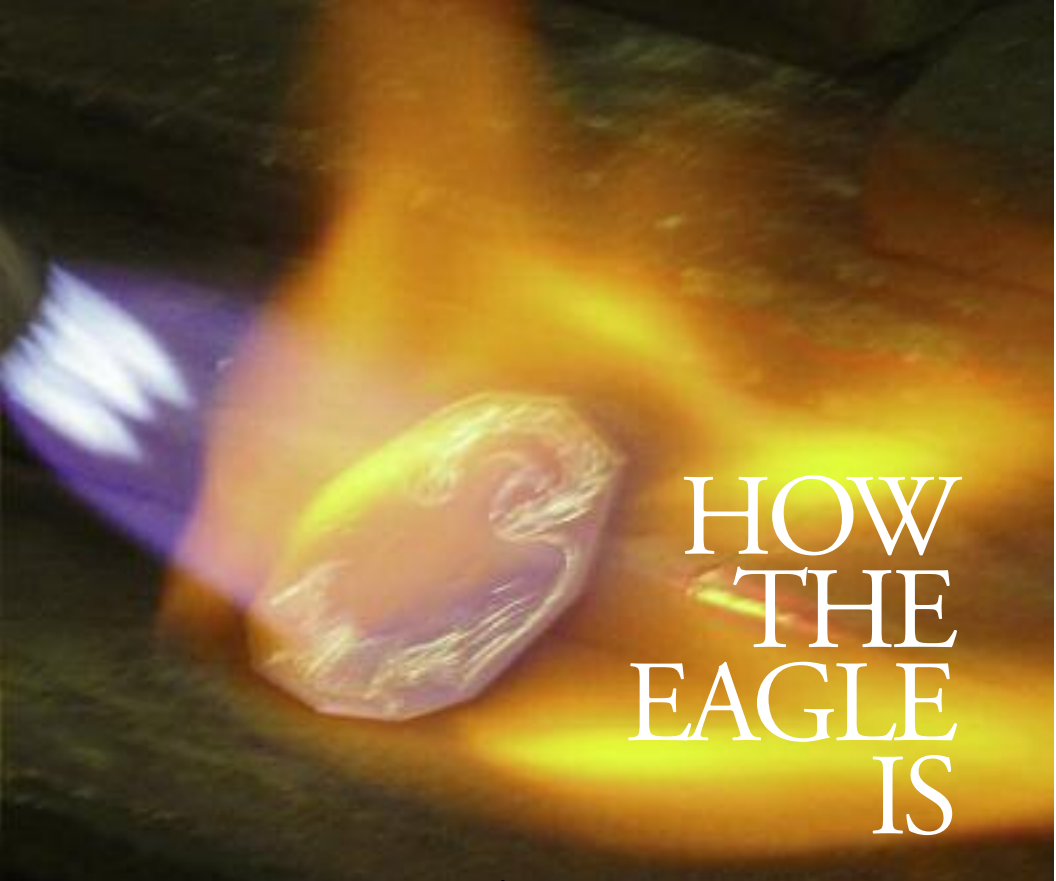
*President General
Forrest Pragoff, S.C.
President Tom Tisdale,
Past President General
Bill Raiford, and Past
President General
Matthew, wearing his
new Washington-
Lafayette Eagle.*



of a president general, served the Virginia Society as president and the General Society as vice president general and president general. His tenure as president general ended in 1986, but he has remained active in the leadership of the Society for the last twenty-two years, most recently as co-chairman of the Audit Committee. Few men have given as much of their life to the service of our “One Society of Friends.”

The second Washington-Lafayette Eagle was presented in February 2009 to William McGowan “Mac” Matthew of the South Carolina Society. A longtime leader of the South Carolina Society, of which he served as president, “Mac” Matthew served the General Society successively as assistant secretary general, secretary general, vice president general, and president general. As president general, he oversaw the capital campaign that funded the renovation of Anderson House—including the creation of a state-of-the-art library facility—and since the end of his tenure in 1998 he has been continuously active in the leadership of both the South Carolina and the General Society.

Both of these extraordinary men have given freely of their time, money and talent to the goals of our Society. They have cultivated future leaders of our Society and, in their remarkable service, provided us with models of unwavering dedication to the principles of our founders. Future recipients of our Society’s highest honor—the Washington-Lafayette Eagle—will be judged by the remarkable standard of service set by these first honorees.



HOW THE EAGLE IS

MADE

*By Don Ross
President, Citypride, Ltd.*

The Eagle badge of The Society of the Cincinnati has been produced in the same manner since its inception two hundred and twenty-five years ago. A.M. Ross & Son has been making the Delaware, New York, Tench Tilghman and miniature Eagles since 1982, first for Bailey, Banks and Biddle and more recently for Citypride, Ltd. In 2006 we were pleased to add the Virginia Eagle to our offerings using extant tooling. In 2008 we were especially honored to create new tooling for the Washington-Lafayette Distinguished Service Eagle, the first new badge authorized by the society in more than a century. Although the

manufacturing processes are essentially the same for all of the Eagles, each type has its own idiosyncrasies, demanding the skills of a master craftsman to achieve a finely made badge. In the description of the manufacturing process that follows, I will concentrate on the Delaware Eagle as being typical of all of the Eagles.

Most jewelry made today is cast using the lost wax process developed by the Phoenicians about 4,000 years ago. The process of lost wax casting involves making a model in wax and pouring molten metal into a mold cavity created after burning out the wax (hence the term “lost wax”). Modern casting methods have improved greatly but casting still leaves open the possibility of gas bubbles forming in the cooling metal causing porosity (small holes) in the metal. In addition, a casting skin is formed by crystallization on the surface of the cooling metal; this skin must be removed by abrasive processes which can wipe out delicate detail on the item. However, Cincinnati badges are produced using the *die struck* method, a similarly ancient method common for making coins and medals but requiring large mechanical or, in our case, hydraulic presses which are not available to the average jeweler. Die striking is the preferred method for the production of coins and medals because it avoids the problems inherent in lost wax casting. Die casting provides for less porosity, more durability and greater detail.

*Cincinnati Eagles
are die struck,
a method used
to produce the
finest coins and
medals since
ancient times.*

The die struck method involves squeezing a cold piece of soft metal (brass, silver or gold) into a hardened steel die under pressure to form it into the shape of the desired product which has been cut in the negative into the steel die (Figure 1). The piece is work hardened by the pressure and has to be annealed (a process of relieving the internal stress on the metal by heating and cooling to prescribed times and temperatures to soften it) before being squeezed in the die again. Typically, the Eagle body requires three to four separate annealings and strikes at about 150 tons per square inch to complete the design on the piece of metal. Steel dies can have a life of thousands of pieces and, indeed, the dies we use today are most likely the original dies from the early part of the twentieth century. As back-up we make *hobs* (Figure 2) which are steel positives made by driving softened steel into the hardened die. The hob can then be hardened and driven into softened steel to create a new die, which in turn is hardened and can be used for



From left to right:

Figure 1: The steel dies for the Delaware Eagle ready for striking.

Figure 2: Hobs are steel positives used to create new dies.

Figure 3: Each Delaware Eagle is actually five die-struck pieces.

production again. In addition to the hobs, we make copper impressions which can be used as electrodes to literally burn a new die using an electronic discharge machine (EDM). This assures the continuity of the design for generations.

The Delaware Eagle is produced in five basic pieces: one two-sided Eagle body, two ovals with lettering around, and two center seals (Figure 3). The first step is to cut a piece of sheet metal (brass or gold) large enough to cover the design in the die and thick enough to fill the design. The Eagle body dies are “double” dies meaning that, since the body is two-sided, the metal is squeezed between two mirror image dies with guide pins to keep them lined up. The metal is annealed (Figure 4: see title page) and squeezed again until the design is complete. When the metal is pushed into the steel dies at high pressure it spreads out leaving “flash” around the design in the same manner that a penny put on the railroad tracks flattens out and gets larger. This flash must be trimmed off by hand using a fine bladed jeweler’s saw (Figure 5). The trimming requires great skill as, unfortunately, the two halves of the “matched” dies do not line up properly due to the limits of technology at the time these



Figure 5: Flash is trimmed off with a jeweler's saw.

Figure 6: Saw marks are removed with a file.

dies were made. At places the saw blade is cutting at a 45-degree angle instead of straight up and down and if too much metal is cut off from the edge of the piece on one side or the other the enamel will not be held in place properly. All open areas within the design must also be hand pierced. The center of the Eagle body where the seals will be attached is also removed to lighten the Eagle. In addition, the seals themselves are struck with a "slug" or disposable piece of brass behind the metal to make the seals hollow, thus saving weight. All of this weight saving is not important if making a base metal Eagle but it saves significantly on the cost of the karat gold Eagle.

Once all of the pieces have been struck and trimmed, all of the saw marks must be removed from the edges of the piece with files (Figure 6) and abrasive wheels to get a smooth edge. Then the five pieces are assembled using solder (silver solder for brass, gold solder for karat gold). The pieces are heated to 1600° F to get the solder to flow and create an even and strong bond between the parts (Figure 7). After cooling the trademark and the quality stamps are applied using metal stamps. Now the Eagle badge looks like an Eagle badge and the finishing process begins.



From left to right:

Figure 7: The parts are soldered together.

Figure 8: A brass brush is used to give the Eagle a matte finish.

Using a series of brushes, buffs and polishing compounds, the Eagle is then brought to its final finish. In the case of the gold plated Eagle the entire piece is blasted with glass beads finer than sand. Then the piece is brushed with a fine brass brush to brighten the finish just a bit to achieve a historical matte finish (Figure 8). The Eagle is then electroplated, a process whereby 22 karat gold in solution is drawn to the item by running an electrical current through the piece and bath (Figure 9). Solid gold Eagles are polished to a mirror finish on the edges and buffed lightly on the wings to bring out the detail. Karat gold Eagles are also given a flash in the electroplating tank to even out and give richness to the color of the metal. Then it's on to enameling.

Until the mid 1980s, vitreous (glass) enamels were used. The ground, colored glass was put into recesses on the piece and heated to about 1400° F until the powdered glass melted into a liquid. When cooled, the glass had to be polished down with an abrasive stone and then reheated to give it its vitreous appearance. The process was repeated for each color. Needless to say, this was tedious and time consuming. In addition, gold plating had to be applied after this high temperature firing risking



Figure 9: The Eagle is electroplated in a 22 karat gold solution.

Figure 10: Epoxy enamels are used to apply color.

cracking the enamel and rendering the piece scrap. In the mid 1980's the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) required reformulation and new handling standards for vitreous enamel since some of the colors were created with metals such as cadmium and cobalt, known carcinogens. Most companies, including A.M. Ross & Son, gave up vitreous enamel at this time in favor of epoxy-based enamels. Epoxy enamels are made by mixing colored resins with a hardener. Put on as a liquid, the epoxy has a working time of 5 to 30 minutes and is available in various viscosities to facilitate application to domed or curved surfaces. The epoxy cures at air temperature or the curing process can be speeded up by baking at low temperatures (200° F). The resulting enamel colors are brighter and stronger than the old vitreous enamel and much easier and safer to work with. The epoxy enamel is mixed and put into a syringe connected to a pneumatic dispenser. Using different size needle tips the enamel is applied to the appropriate places. One side is completed and cured before the other side is started (Figure 10). Some proprietary steps are then taken with the epoxy enamel to assure its resemblance to traditional vitreous enamel. On the Tench Tilghman Eagle the white color is epoxy enamel but the details of feathers, eye, and

wording around the center are all hand painted at this stage by a very skilled artist working with a one-bristle brush. This design is closest to some of the earliest L'Enfant badges. We now have a completed Eagle and are ready to attach it to the ribbon by perpendicular jump rings attached to the top of the Eagle.

The craftsmanship employed in creating each Cincinnati Eagle combines ancient techniques with the most modern methods. The result is the most elegant insignia of any hereditary society.

The ribbon used for The Society of the Cincinnati and many hereditary societies is made to military specification by the last remaining ribbon mill in the United States capable of producing to those specifications. In fact, Cincinnati ribbon is made on

the exact same looms as all military ribbons. The looms are almost 100 years old and have hundreds of moving parts that require constant maintenance. Production is about one yard per hour but three or four different ribbons can run on one loom simultaneously. Cincinnati ribbon has a moiré pattern, applied by running the ribbon through wet rollers to create that wavy pattern on the ribbon grain. The suspension ribbon is two inches in length with a pin back for attachment to a coat.

Upon attachment of the suspension ribbon and final inspection, the new Eagle is packaged and is ready to fly.



EAGLES FOR SALE

Acquiring Your Own Insignia

The first Eagles produced in Paris in 1784 were sold to French members for four French guineas, or about seventeen dollars each. The first Eagles presented to American members, which were somewhat more substantial, cost twenty-five dollars. These early Eagles now sell at auction for \$50,000 or more, some 2,000 times their original price. Unless you inherited one of these, or one of the many later versions of the Eagle, you have probably acquired a modern one, or will, by purchase.

A special purchase process has been established to protect the Eagle from unauthorized distribution. Members must follow this process to acquire an Eagle from one of the authorized manufacturers. A member who wants to acquire an Eagle must first contact his constituent society secretary to ask him to advise the executive office of the General Society that the member is in good standing with his constituent society. The executive office will then issue a form, signed by the executive director of

Left to right: The U.S. Miniature Eagle is based on the 1902 Standard Eagle design; The North Carolina Eagle is produced by Liberty Jewelry of Timonium, Maryland; The Tench Tilghman Eagle is the standard Society Eagle; The Virginia Eagle (shown here), along with the New York and Delaware Eagles, is one of three special state Eagles produced by Citypride, Ltd.

the Society, authorizing an authorized manufacturer to supply one Eagle to the designated member. The executive office will mail this authorization form to the member, who must send it directly to the manufacturer when he places his order. Although slightly complicated, this process helps ensure that non-members do not purchase the Eagle and polices the Society's invaluable intellectual property rights in its insignia (*see* "Eagles at Work: Permitted Use of the Cincinnati Name & Eagle," by James Thomas Martin, in this issue).

Citypride, Ltd., of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, is an authorized manufacturer and produces five varieties of Eagles: the Delaware, New York, Virginia, Tench Tilghman, and U.S. Miniature. The Delaware Eagle is the largest of the five, and thus the most detailed. Having the most gold of the modern versions it is also the most expensive. The Tilghman Eagle is currently the standard Eagle. The New York, Virginia and Tilghman Eagles are based on historic designs and are similar in size, about 1 9/16" compared to about 2" overall for the Delaware Eagle. They vary in details, particularly in their enamel work. Members of any constituent society may purchase the New York, Virginia and Delaware Eagles; members of those respective societies tend to prefer their own state designs, but all designs are available for purchase by all members.

Citypride, Ltd., also manufactures the U.S. Miniature, which is about half the size of the Tilghman Eagle. It is actually a miniature version of the Standard Eagle of 1902, which was manufactured by Bailey, Banks and Biddle of Philadelphia. The most noticeable difference between the Tilghman Eagle (and the other modern varieties) and the U.S. Miniature is that the outside edge of the wings of the miniature (like the 1902 Standard Eagle) form a continuous curve with the tips pointing inward, whereas the outside edges of the wings on the larger designs form an open S shape, with the wing tips pointing slightly outward.

Four of the five Eagles produced by Citypride, Ltd., are available in three materials: gold plate over bronze, ten karat gold and fourteen carat gold. The prices vary with the price of gold. The Tilghman Eagle is available in eighteen karat gold only. The latest prices are noted below. Members should contact the manufacturer for the latest prices.

Liberty Jewelry Manufacturing Company, Ltd., of Timonium, Maryland, a second authorized manufacturer, makes the North Carolina Eagle, similar in size and design to the Virginia and New York Eagles, but with subtle, yet distinct differences that sets it apart from its brothers.

The North Carolina Eagle is available in fourteen and eighteen karat gold, but not in a gold plated or ten karat gold version.

Citypride, Ltd., generally has one or two Eagles of each variety in stock for immediate delivery, but if orders come in quick succession there may be a wait of up to three weeks before Citypride will ship a made-to-order Eagle. Liberty Jewelry generally makes the North Carolina Eagles to order, and does not have them ready-made to ship. So plan ahead. Your Eagle will be worth any brief wait. Once complete, your new Eagle can serve you and your successors for many generations.

In addition, a French Miniature Eagle is manufactured by the Paris firm of Arthus Bertrand. This Eagle is sold directly to members by the General Society. For details, see the *Marketplace* section at the back of this issue.

Current Prices

Citypride, Ltd.
411 Cottman Street
Jenkintown, Pa.,
19046
Toll free:
888-679-8888
Fax: 215-884-1763
www.cityprideltd.com

New York Eagle
Bronze Gilt: \$165
10 Karat: \$670
14 Karat: \$855

Delaware Eagle
Bronze Gilt: \$200
10 Karat: \$1,125
14 Karat: \$1,645

Virginia Eagle
Bronze Gilt: \$225
10 Karat: \$1,125
14 Karat: \$1,575

Tench Tilghman Eagle
18 Karat Only:
\$1,650

U.S. Miniature Eagle
Bronze Gilt: \$100
10 Karat: \$288
14 Karat: \$355

Liberty Jewelry
Manufacturing
Company, Ltd.
7-G West
Aylesbury Road
Timonium, Md.
21093
410-560-6787
Toll free:
877-604-7901
North Carolina Eagle
14 Karat: \$900
18 Karat: \$1,105



*Watercolor painting ca. 1900 of the Eagle made for Larz Anderson by Tiffany & Co.
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938.*

EAGLES *IN* FLIGHT

Wearing the Eagle

The first Eagles were generally worn suspended from a ribbon two inches long or longer, attached to a metal bar that was passed through a buttonhole in the wearer's lapel. Few early Eagles still have their original ribbons. Two known examples with original ribbons—the Tilghman Eagle, which is in the Society's museum collection, and Alexander Hamilton's Eagle, which is owned by a descendant, still have their original suspension bars. The problem with this suspension method is that ribbon generally bunched where it enters the buttonhole. Some early members attached a small bar on the ribbon just outside the buttonhole to keep the ribbon flat. The Eagle was always worn on the left lapel, symbolically over the wearer's heart.

Pins did not come into common use as a way to suspend the Eagle until the middle of the nineteenth century, and became the dominant method before the turn of the century. In the group photograph of the 1896 Triennial at Valley Forge, thirty-five of the sixty members are wearing Eagles (a couple more may be hidden). Most of the members without Eagles are wearing rosettes. Some are wearing Eagles *and* rosettes, a practice now forbidden. Of the thirty-five Eagles, only three appear to be suspended from buttonhole bars in the original manner. Thirty appear to be suspended from pins. One member is wearing his Eagle suspended from a small chain fixed to his lapel, with no ribbon at all. And one member has adopted the latest fashion, and is wearing his Eagle suspended from a neck ribbon (the first instance of this in the surviving Triennial photographs, which date from 1884). Wearing the Eagle

suspended from a neck ribbon became increasingly popular after the turn of the century.

A resolution was adopted at the 1941 Triennial authorizing the president general to appoint a committee to prepare comprehensive rules for wearing the Eagle and other insignia of the Society and to declare those rules in force. This committee, consisting of Colonel Edgar Erskine Hume, Major General Preston Brown and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Copeland Jones, presented their work to President General Bryce Metcalf, who declared on March 20, 1943, that these rules were “approved, in full force, and binding upon the members.” They remain in force, with some minor qualifications, today. The italicized comments interspersed in the text are not a part of these rules.

*Rules for Wearing the Eagle
and Other Insignia of
The Society of the Cincinnati
March 20, 1943*

Manner of Wearing the Eagle by Civilian Members

The Eagle, suspended from a ribbon of the Society, may be worn either on the left breast or around the neck, according to the occasion. It is won on the breast with ordinary and semi-formal dress, also with dinner coat, formal evening dress with black tie, and civilian full evening dress; but it is worn around the neck only with civilian full evening dress.

When the Eagle is worn on the breast, the length of the ribbon should be one and one half inches, with the top horizontally on a line with the armpit. It may be fastened at the buttonhole of the lapel or on the coat itself.

When the Eagle is won at the neck, the ribbon should be outside that part of the tie which passes around the collar, and the top of the badge should not be more than one inch below the bow of the tie.

A member possessing the Eagle and ribbon of an original member may wear the badge in the same manner in which it was worn by its original owner. This rule does not, however, hold in respect to the replacement of a worn original ribbon.



President General Bryce Metcalf (Conn.) wearing the Diamond Eagle properly on his left lapel.

The Eagle, or failing that, the rosette, should be worn at all meetings of the Society.

When the Eagle is worn around the neck it will not be accompanied by any other decoration thus suspended. If a member considers that such other decoration should be so worn, the Eagle must be displayed on the breast or lapel, either in standard size or in miniature, according to the circumstances. This rule does not apply to the wearing of the Eagle or other decorations at the neck in uniform when such use is authorized by pertinent uniform regulations.

The Eagle should never be worn with the ribbon, nor be worn with the rosette of this or any other decoration; neither should the Eagle or the rosette be worn on an overcoat except on occasions of ceremony in the open air when weather conditions require the use of such garment.

The Eagle is not an article of jewelry, and neither it nor any other badge or emblem of the Society should be used as a watch fob, charm, or the like.

The Eagle may be worn only by duly admitted members of the Society. The right does not extend to members of their families or to their successors prior to their admission to membership.

The Washington-Lafayette Eagle for Distinguished Service to the Society, created in 2008, constitutes a significant exception to these rules. It may be worn by the member to whom it is presented either at the neck or lapel like any other Eagle. However it remains the property of the General Society and must be returned to the General Society at the demise of the member who received it. It may not be worn by his heirs or successors unless they receive it from the General Society themselves.

Manner of Wearing the Eagle on Uniforms

In accordance with a Joint Resolution of Congress of 25 September 1890, the Eagle, as a distinctive badge adopted by a military society of composed “of men who served in the Armies and Navies of the United States in the War of the Revolution . . . may be worn on all occasions of ceremony by the officers and enlisted men of the Army and Navy of the United States who are members of said organization[s] in their own right.” When so worn it will be in the manner prescribed in the Uniform

Regulations of such services, or where no mode of wearing is specified, then as nearly as practicable in accordance with the Society's regulations.

The matter of wearing the badges of the Society of the Cincinnati and certain other hereditary societies is considered in the Uniform Regulations of the Army, Navy, etc., and in some instances, the occasions on which such insignia may be worn is specified, or provision is made that when they are won the various decorations and medals awarded by such armed forces may not be worn. However, no regulations of an executive department of the Government can alter the force and effect of the aforementioned resolution of Congress.

When the Eagle is worn by a member in the service of a foreign government, he shall follow the manner prescribed by the service to which he belongs.

Miniature Eagles

The Eagle and ribbon in reduced size, approximately one half that of the standard size, are authorized for wear on semi-formal or formal dress, and should correspond in size with the other miniature decorations, etc., with which they may be worn. Miniatures should be worn only on the left lapel. They should never be worn, either on the lapel or breast, with any full-sized decorations, except plaques. If, while wearing miniatures, a member desires to give a place of honor to the Eagle of the Cincinnati in full size, he may wear it around the neck, but only with full evening dress.

The Eagle of the President General

This was originally presented to General Washington by the Count d'Estaing on behalf of the officers of the French Navy in 1784, and has descended to and been worn by his successors in the office of President General. The Eagle, still preserved in its original case and bearing its original ribbon, is set in diamonds and other precious stones, and has always been suspended from the left lapel. It is worn at meetings of the Society and upon such other occasions of ceremony as the President General may consider appropriate.



President General Edgar Erskine Hume (Va.) presenting an Eagle on a neck ribbon to Sir Winston Churchill. Strictly speaking, the great prime minister's dress that evening called for the Eagle to be worn on the lapel.



The Diamond Eagle, as it is known, is inscribed on the reverse: "Donated in the name of the French sailors to His Excellency the General Washington." The security of the Diamond Eagle is now committed by the bylaws of The Society of the Cincinnati (a corporation) to three trustees: the President General, Vice President General and Secretary General. The Diamond Eagle is no longer stored in its original case, which is in the Society's museum collection. The original ribbon, if indeed it was preserved as late as 1943, is no longer known to exist.

Ribbon

The ribbon of the Society is one and one half inches in width, with one inch of the center light blue, bordered with white.

A bar of the ribbon is authorized for use on uniforms to designate membership in the Society.

Successor's Ribbon

Gentlemen who are recognized by any one of the fourteen State Societies as successors or heirs to membership in the Cincinnati are authorized to wear a section of narrow ribbon on the Society's pattern. This should be run through the buttonhole of the left lapel, extend flat round the edge of the lapel, and be fastened underneath. The right to wear this ribbon shall cease when the person to whom the privilege was given has applied for and been admitted to membership in the Society.

These rules were adopted before the modern category of "Successor Member" was created.

Designated successors to membership in those constituent societies that do not admit "Successor Members" may still avail themselves of the use of the "Successor's Ribbon."

Rosette

Rosettes of the Society's ribbon are made in several sizes, and a member has the privilege of choosing the size he prefers.

The rosette may be worn in the left lapel with informal, semi-formal, formal dress (white or black tie), but may never be worn at the same time the Eagle or badges of any other society, or with any decoration. It should not be worn on an overcoat except on occasions of ceremony when weather conditions require the use of such garment.

Members who are or have been President General, Vice President General, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer General, or Assistant Treasurer General, may wear a small section of gold braid under the rosette. Members who are or have been Chaplain General, Marshal, Counselor, or members of the Standing Committee of the General Society, may wear a section of braid, longitudinally half gold and half silver, under the rosette. Members who hold or have held office in one of the State Societies may wear a section of silver braid under the rosette.

The rosette is currently sold in only one size, but others may be revived in the future. No example of a rosette with braid, as described in this section, has been found, nor has a photograph of a member wearing a rosette with braid been found in the collections of the General Society. The use of such rosettes, if ever adopted in practice, seems to have fallen out of fashion or favor. Outgoing Presidents General are now presented with a rosette with a small diamond in the center, which they may wear for the rest of their lives. It may not be worn by their heirs or successors.

Insignia of General Officers

Members who are or have been President General, Vice President General, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer General, or Assistant Treasurer General, may upon appropriate occasions

wear a broad cordon of the ribbon of the Society four inches in width. This will be worn with civilian full evening dress, or dress uniform, and will pass from the left shoulder under the waistcoat to the right hip. With the cordon the Eagle will not be worn at the neck, but will be attached to the large rosette at the junction of the ends of the broad ribbon below the hip. No other cordon, whether of an order or of a hereditary society, may be worn with that of the Society of the Cincinnati.

No example of such a cordon is preserved in the collections of the General Society, nor has a photograph of a member wearing one been found.

EAGLES *at* WORK

PERMITTED USE OF THE CINCINNATI
NAME & EAGLE

*By James Thomas Martin
(N.C.), Counselor*



SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI—
U. S. A.

6

This print of the Eagle on silk was packaged as a premium, like a baseball card, with tobacco products in the 1920s, a use of our registered mark the Society would frown upon today. Museum Acquisitions Fund Purchase, 2008.

The name, THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI, is registered by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to The Society of the Cincinnati for indicating membership in its fraternal organization. The Eagle is also registered by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to The Society of the Cincinnati for indicating membership in its fraternal association. These federal registrations grant to the General Society both the right and the responsibility to control uses of the Name and the Eagle.

The General Society encourages its constituent societies to allow its members to use the Name and/or the Eagle to indicate their membership in The Society of the Cincinnati. However, neither a member nor a constituent society may use the Name or the Eagle to indicate that a member of the Society enjoys collective endorsement or commercial advantage because of his membership.

One example is use of the Name and/or Eagle on the letterhead of a member's stationery. Such stationery must be used only for Society business, and must not be used for personal correspondence, the endorsement of any political issue, commercial activity, such as the sale of a book written by the member, or for the purpose of raising funds for any entity other than the Society. Similarly, the use of the Name and/or Eagle on a personal invitation, or on the website of a member of a constituent society is prohibited.

Another example is the use of the Eagle on a grave marker or monument. Such use is permitted to indicate that the deceased was a member of The Society of the Cincinnati. Similarly, the use of an Eagle doorknocker indicates that the inhabitant is a member of our fraternal association, and the wearing of an Eagle blazer patch indicates the wearer is a member of our fraternal association. Such symbols must be purchased from the General Society, and the use of those symbols must be controlled by the General Society for the benefit of all members.

Let us all remember the standards set by George Washington, who frowned upon self-aggrandizement and the use of the association for commercial advantage. If every member keeps George Washington's standards in mind, the General Society should never need to prohibit specific uses of the Name or Eagle by any of its members. Any question regarding the propriety of such uses will be resolved by the executive committee. If you have a question about a potential use of the Name and/or Eagle, please contact the executive director, who will advise you of existing policy or forward your inquiry to the executive committee for a resolution.



EAGLES NESTING

Collecting the Eagle

Over nearly seventy years of collecting artifacts for its museum collections, the Society has assembled the largest public collection of The Society of the Cincinnati insignia. The thirty-five Eagles in the museum collections—including the unrivaled Diamond Eagle, examples of the earliest French Eagles made in 1784, and later versions commissioned from Tiffany & Co. and Bailey, Banks & Biddle—document the great variety of types and makers of Eagles, as well as some of the Society members who owned them. But with significant gaps in this assemblage, the Society has more work to do to establish the definitive collection of Eagles from all periods and makers—an achievement that would be the pride of the museum collections.

*The Society Owns
the World's Finest
Collection of Eagles*

The Society's collection of Eagles spans the three centuries of their manufacture. The Society is fortunate to own two examples of the very first Eagles made on Pierre L'Enfant's order in Paris beginning in January 1784. L'Enfant commissioned forty-five small Eagles for French officers to encourage the organization of a French branch of the Society. Made first by Duval and Francastel and copied almost immediately by other Parisian jewelers, these earliest French Eagles are now extremely rare. One example in the Society's collections was presented to Commodore Joshua Barney (1759-1818), a naval officer during the Revolutionary War and, in late 1783, the commander of the *George Washington*, the ship that sailed L'Enfant to France on his mission to obtain the Eagles. Joshua Barney's Eagle was donated to the Society in 1990 by William Joshua Barney Jr., of the Maryland Society.

The Tench Tilghman Eagle, one of several Eagles George Washington purchased and presented to his aides-de-camp, is one of the treasures of the Society's museum collections. The Eagle still has its original ribbon.



(Left to right) Rhode Island Eagle, ca. 1821; Miniature Standard Eagle of 1902 (top); Eagle made by Jeremiah Andrews, ca. 1790, and owned by Richard Clough Anderson (bottom); Eagle made by Tiffany & Co., ca. 1910, and owned by Larz Anderson (top); Standard Eagle, ca. 1905, owned by Horatio Appleton Lamb (bottom); unidentified Eagle, possibly French; and Eagle made by Tiffany & Co., ca. 1900, and owned by Hazard Stevens.

One of the best-known Eagles in the Society's collections is that owned by Maryland Lieutenant Colonel Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), an aide-de-camp to George Washington. Tilghman's Eagle is one of seven Eagles ordered by Washington for his former aides. Made by Duval and Francastel in Paris during the first half of 1784, it represents the forty Eagles—termed by Minor Myers the “Larger L'Enfant Eagles”—that L'Enfant had made for those Society members who ordered a badge before L'Enfant left America. The Tilghman example is even more

remarkable for its original silk ribbon and horizontal metal clasp that still cling to the gold Eagle. One of five “Larger L’Enfant Eagles” in the museum collections, the Tilghman Eagle was donated in 1953 by Harrison Tilghman of the Maryland Society.

The first American-made Eagle was produced by Philadelphia goldsmith Jeremiah Andrews beginning in December 1784. The Society’s collections include one Eagle made by Andrews, that owned by Virginia Lieutenant Colonel Richard Clough Anderson (1750-1826), a former aide-de-camp to the marquis de Lafayette. Andrews advertised his version of the Society Eagle—which displays less rounded wings, a distinctive head and curved beak, and a more oval-shaped wreath than the French prototypes—in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Savannah until 1790, the year in which Anderson’s Eagle was likely made. Anderson’s Eagle descended in his family to his great grandson, Larz Anderson—a Society member and the owner of Anderson House—and was given to the Society in 1938 by Isabel Anderson, Larz’s widow. The gift marked the first time that the Society had acquired an Eagle since Charles Cotesworth Pinckney donated the Diamond Eagle in 1811.

In the early nineteenth century, individual Society members and constituent societies began commissioning Eagles that differed vastly from each other and the original eighteenth century Eagles. Among the first constituent societies to commission an Eagle was the Rhode Island Society, which, in 1821, secured thirty-two distinctive Eagles from an unidentified Philadelphia firm. Their broad and heavy appearance, relative lack of enamel decoration, and use of gilded coin silver rather than gold distinguish these Eagles from those that had come before them. The Society’s collections contain three of these early Rhode Island Eagles, including one owned by George Washington Cole (1779/1780-1832), a member of the Rhode Island Society in the line of his father, Captain Thomas Cole. Brinton Le Compte donated the Eagle, along with a ca. 1820 miniature portrait of George Washington Cole, in 1997.

One of the more prolific makers of the Society Eagle was the renowned New York firm Tiffany & Co., which was first employed by the Rhode Island Society in the early 1880s. Over the next thirty years, the Tiffany Eagles would be imitated frequently, even on commemorative objects such as watches and tobacco silks or cards. Among the four Tiffany Eagles in the Society’s collections are those owned by Gen. Hazard Stevens (1842-1918), made ca. 1900 and donated by Mrs.

Charles McKinley Saltzman in 1958, and Larz Anderson (1866-1937), made ca. 1910 and given by Isabel Anderson in 1938. Anderson's Eagle is accompanied in the collections by a watercolor painting by Tiffany of the Society insignia.

The Society Eagle would finally be standardized in 1902, when the Philadelphia firm Bailey, Banks & Biddle was contracted to produce what came to be known as the Standard Eagle and its accompanying miniature Eagle, a variation to be worn with evening dress following the European tradition. Asa Bird Gardiner, then secretary general of the Society, described the new design—which differed significantly from previous types—as “an artistic delineation of the Bald American Eagle” and claimed that the artist produced the design from observing bald eagles in a public park, perhaps the Philadelphia Zoo. The Society's collections include four Standard Eagles and one miniature, including one made ca. 1905 that was owned by Horatio Appleton Lamb (1850-1926), vice president of the Massachusetts Society from 1913 until his death. Lamb's Eagle was donated to the Society in 1980 by his daughters Aimee and Rosamond Lamb.

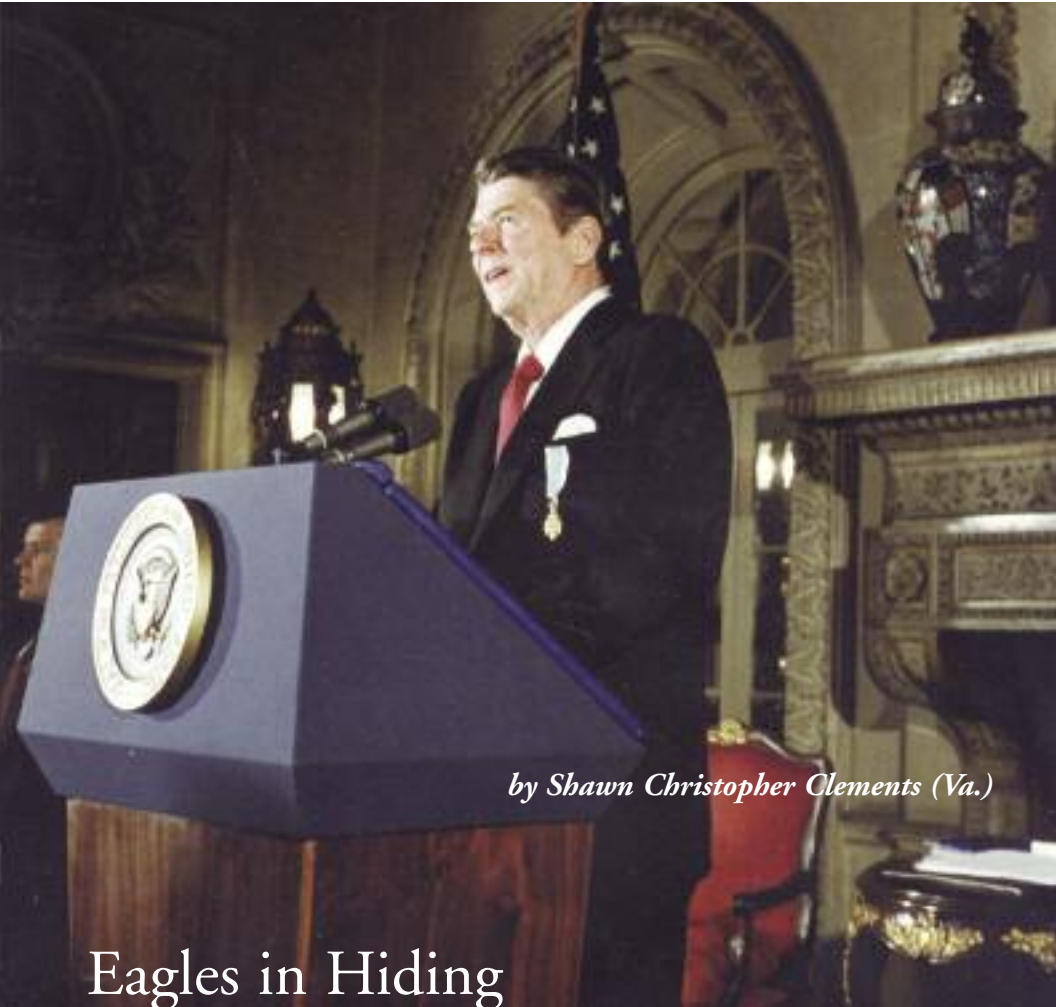
The most recently acquired Society Eagle, an intriguing silver example purchased at auction in 2004, highlights the work that remains to be done to identify previously unrecorded types of Eagles and add unrepresented Eagles to the museum collections. Possibly made in France, this silver Eagle does not closely resemble any of the eighty types identified by Minor Myers Jr., in his 1998 study, which remains the most comprehensive publication on the Society Eagles. The Society's collection, extraordinary as it may be, lacks examples of many of these identified types, including:

- the “Smaller L'Enfant Eagle” made in 1784 to sell to members who had not pre-ordered the larger example.
- Eagles made by John Cook and Stephen Richards in New York in the early nineteenth century.
- Eagles made in France for the New York Society in the mid-nineteenth century.

- and numerous examples commissioned by constituent societies such as the Delaware Eagle of 1895, the New York Eagle of 1896, the Georgia Eagle of 1902, the North Carolina Eagle of 1904, the Virginia Eagle of 1906, and the New Hampshire Eagles of 1903 and 1917.

The Society also seeks to add to its collection, or even locate for reference, Eagles associated with significant members of the Society—including presidents of the United States and other world leaders, like Winston Churchill—who received Eagles.

Emily L. Schulz, deputy director and curator



by Shawn Christopher Clements (Va.)

Eagles in Hiding The Search for Presidential Eagles

Nineteen U.S. presidents have been members of The Society of the Cincinnati. George Washington and James Monroe were original members. Franklin Pierce was an hereditary member. The other sixteen were (or are) honorary members—although some of them could trace their lineage to officers in the Continental service.

While Washington's Diamond Eagle is the proud possession of the General Society, where are the rest of the Presidential Eagles? Recently, I contacted every presidential library and historic home associated with

President Ronald Reagan, addressing the Society of the Cincinnati at Anderson House and wearing the Eagle.

these prestigious members in my search for the answer. In this process, I have met with fascinating finds and some disappointing dead ends. The Eagles owned by Benjamin Harrison, Herbert Hoover, and Harry Truman have been located. The others elude us—for now.

A piece of this puzzle that may yield information and help recover some of these hidden treasures is the correspondence between the Society and the presidents honored with membership. These documents give us a glimpse of the moments when various presidents were welcomed into membership, with details such as names, dates, plans, and schedules with the necessary protocol and process. A document uncovered in my search, demonstrates that the night President Harry S. Truman was to receive his Eagle, he had to cancel due to the death of a Supreme Court Justice. He was awarded the Eagle at a later time in a private ceremony at the White House. I have also discovered the speech President William Howard Taft gave during his induction ceremony which mentions the condition and current climate of Washington, D.C., at the time. Other documents can reveal the itinerary of the president, add may mention other organizations he may have been associated with and where these items may be residing. I have found that many of the libraries and homes are unaware of the fact that such a membership existed until they researched the request and found these documents. These missing items do not seem to be limited to presidents of the distant past. The last two presidents to be honored by the Society have little information as well. President Reagan's diploma is in the collections of the Reagan Library, but his Eagle is not. Nor has anything associated with the membership of George H.W. Bush been catalogued at his presidential library.

History takes its toll: fires, war, and simple neglect can lead to the loss of these artifacts. However, in this age of communication and access, I am optimistic that we will find more presidential Eagles in the future. Until then, I ask that my fellow Society members who may have ideas, know of private collections, or are aware of family members of presidents who may have these items to aid us.

So where are all of the presidential Eagles? Have they been lost to the ravages of time? Will we ever recover these great historic pieces of such Presidents as James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, or FDR? It is my sincere hope that you will join me in the search for the presidential Eagles and reclaim this part of our unique and honored history.



George Turner (S.C.), assistant secretary general, 1787-1790, drew this beautiful watercolor Eagle on the inside cover of a General Society minute book. The Eagle has always captivated the attention of members.

Eagle TALES

Members Share Fond Eagle Memories

A self-described “Happy Member” tells his Eagle Tale: *“Every year when notice of our state Society’s annual meeting would arrive, inviting Hereditary Members to present their Successors, my father would send it to me with the notation: “Maybe Next Year!” Well “Next Year” never came, an omission no doubt facilitated by the choice my father confronted: enjoy a lovely midwestern lake on a summer holiday with his family around him or travel to a far-away state capitol to spend his Fourth of July. Having done it once, many decades ago when my grandfather presented my father, I sympathized with his hesitation but could not resist reminding him on occasion that his own father had exercised greater self-discipline.*

That sympathy evaporated when, after his passing and never having been formally presented as his Successor, I had to fill out an excruciating application complete with demands for various documentary evidence proving that I was indeed who I had always thought I was. (Fortunately for me, a kindly officer of our state Society helped me make it up and over the gunnels without undue cross examination as it turned out he was an old friend of my father’s).

But, all was forgiven when—mirabile dictu—I found in my father’s dresser drawer something that he had never before displayed, or even mentioned: a small leather box from “Tiffany (London)” in which was mounted my great grandfather’s Eagle which he apparently acquired when our state Society was reconstituted in the 1880’s. Given the manner in which miscellaneous “debris” is often handled by one’s heirs, I consider it a minor miracle to have been the first to spot this precious item. It now resides in a bank vault. Being far too absent-minded and prone to losing personal effects, I doubt I will ever risk wearing it. I wore my grandfather’s rosette to a charitable event two years ago and never saw it again. For me, it is enough to know that it is safe and available someday to inspire my son and—perhaps “Next Year”—my formal Successor.”

Dr. Preston Russell (Va.), who calls himself the “Man Without an Eagle,” recounts: *I proudly bought my golden eagle when I became a member in 1983. It cost nearly \$200, which seemed like a lot of money. Designed by Pierre-Charles L’Enfant, the medal had added meaning because he was almost killed here at the 1779 Battle of Savannah. I would lovingly tuck it away each year for trips to Anderson House where I could actually wear it, in the spirit of a comical 1930s poem published in The New Yorker:*

*The DAR-lings chatter like starlings, telling their ancestor’s names.
While grimly aloof, with looks of reproof, sit the Colonial Dames.
nd the Cincinnati, all merry and chatty, dangle their badges
and pendants.
But haughty and proud, disdaining the crowd, brood the
Mayflower Descendants.*

Over years of being exceedingly merry and chatty, the ribbon became frayed and yellowed, with additional little stains related to wine and other evidence of forgotten frolics with new friends, who became my old friends over a quarter century. Since I tend to be careless—especially after “lost weekends” at Anderson House—I began to pin my eagle inside the breast pocket of my tuxedo. This was very effective until several years ago my wife, Barbara, with her compulsive sense of cleanliness, sent the tuxedo to the cleaners the day after, even though (for a guy) the various little spots here and there from the latest bash seemed invisible (especially by midnight). Not surprisingly, my prized medal vanished and like the man without a country, I am a member without an eagle: Alas.



Eagles offered for sale outside the Society sometimes produce sticker shock. George Boyd V (N.Y.) is one several members who report being surprised by the prices that get put on Eagles that pass out of member hands into those of dealers: *Sandra and I stayed on a bit after the French triennial. I was wandering around in an antiques mall in the center of Paris when I discovered a paraphernalia shop. There was a Cincinnati Eagle. I said to myself, “Oh, goody, I will get it out of circulation and bring it back into the fold”—that is until I asked the price—\$2,050.00!*

Several members report that they wear Eagles they inherited from their fathers. Clifford Butler Lewis (Pa.) comments: *I own two Eagles—one for the jacket, and one on a neck ribbon, both from my father. I feel he shares my parties when I wear them, especially the neck ribbon one, and that he is close to me when I do that. The Society was a large part of his life, and I am very honored that I can still represent him through his Eagles.*



Some Eagles pass through several generations. Thomas David Pearce, president of the Delaware Society from 1902 to 1907, had a special Eagle made sometime between 1895 and 1907. It passed from him to Francis King Wainwright, then to the latter's son T.F. Dixon Wainwright, who presented it to his nephew Richard Saltonstall Auchincloss (Del.) when the latter became a member in 1976. Dick Auchincloss notes: *"I am very proud to have it and will pass it on to my son, also named Richard, who recently became a member of the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati."* This beautifully made Eagle is distinctive, having a ribbon around its neck that appears to be supporting the shield on its breast.



Jack Duane Warren Jr., executive director, is not a member of the Society, but has a confession to make: *At the October 2006 meeting of the General Society, President General Rob Norfleet and I were meeting in my office on the first floor of Anderson House. We each took off our blue blazers and tossed them on a chair, and at the end of the meeting we each absent-mindedly put on the other's blazer by mistake. I walked out to the Ballroom for lunch a moment later, without the slightest idea I was wearing the Diamond Eagle (the replica, properly called the Hoyt Eagle) on my lapel. I got more than a few odd looks, but it was not until Dr. Ed Woods (N.H.) came up to congratulate me on the promotion that I looked down and realized my mistake—to the laughter of everyone within sight.*

Bryan Scott Johnson, President of the Delaware Society, didn't inherit his Eagle, since he's the first representative of his propositus. He confesses that creative financing was involved in his Eagle purchase: *As a history graduate student attempting to live on my departmental stipend, I often found myself strapped for extra money and even buying groceries at the Amoco station using my credit card. I managed to save the money for my initiation fee from my meager earnings at the South Caroliniana Library but failed to put enough aside for the purchase of an Eagle. After months of waiting, I was finally admitted to hereditary membership in the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati in 1994. Now it was time to purchase an Eagle, but the coffers were empty! As luck would have it, it just happened that the money from my student loan had just been deposited into my student account. With some trepidation, I decided to use my student loan money to purchase my Eagle. Now years later and with some measure of financial security, I look back on my decision and laugh. The loan has since been repaid, and I consider the money (albeit borrowed) to have been extremely well spent!*



The seal of the Society of the Cincinnati is centered on the page. It features an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield contains a smaller shield with a ship and a plow. Above the eagle's head is a laurel wreath. The entire seal is rendered in a light, textured style.

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*An 1825 portrait of the
Marquis de Lafayette by
Charles Fraser (1872-
1860) clearly shows
Lafayette wearing
Washington's special eagle.*

Courtesy of the City of
Charleston, S.C.

*Washington's
Special Eagle Is
Sold at Sotheby's
for \$5.3 Million*

THE WASHINGTON -LAFAYETTE EAGLE

By Dr. Cordell L. Bragg III (S.C.)

In his book *The Insignia of the Society of the Cincinnati*, Minor Myers Jr. refers to badge number six as “Washington’s Special Eagle.” Hidden from public view since 1976, this Cincinnati eagle was recently acquired by Sotheby’s. How many dollars would be required to purchase the eagle specially ordered by George Washington in 1783 and later worn by Lafayette?

*Lafayette treasured
Washington’s special eagle.*

That question was answered shortly after four o’clock on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 11, 2007. Three bidders vied for the eagle, referred to by Sotheby’s as the “Washington-Marquis De Lafayette Order of the Society of the Cincinnati,” during a spirited eleven-minute single-lot auction. The successful bid of \$5,305,000—hammer price plus premiums—is the second highest auction price brought by a numismatic item.

The auction result left many numismatists puzzled. Numismatics is the study and appreciation of coins, medals, and related objects of all cultures as historical and artistic documents. It seems, however, that both the Sotheby’s cataloguers and the auction winner regarded the Washington-Lafayette eagle primarily as an historical artifact and not as a numismatic item at all.



The Washington-Lafayette eagle (obverse). This eagle, made by Duval and Francastel, Paris, 1784, from an original design by Pierre Charles L'Enfant, was specially ordered by George Washington, but possibly never worn by him. Admiral d'Estaing surprised him with the gift of the Diamond Eagle on the same day he received the special eagle from L'Enfant. Nellie Parke Custis Lewis gave the eagle to Lafayette as a gift in 1824. © 2007 Sotheby's, Inc.

In reference to the astronomical sum brought by the badge, numismatic writer Greg Reynolds noted, "It has more elements than other numismatic items or historical memorabilia.... The total value of this Order (medal) is greater than the sum of its numismatic, historical, political and philosophical components. It is a unique and forceful combination of these components...."

The successful bidder was Christophe van de Weghe, an art dealer who has a gallery in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. He was acting as agent for the Foundation of Josée and René de Chambrun, a charitable foundation recognized by the French government in 1959. René, a member of the Société des Cincinnati de France who died in 2002, had been a prominent Paris attorney and one-time president of the crystal firm Baccarat. He was also a descendant of the Marquis de Lafayette. He and his wife Josée purchased Lafayette's castle, Chateau de La Grange, from a cousin of René in 1956.

The Chambrun Foundation announced that the Washington-Lafayette eagle will be displayed in Lafayette's bedroom at his home, the Chateau de La Grange, located approximately thirty miles southeast of Paris, and alluded to the possibility of a temporary display in the United States

sometime in the future. The Washington-Lafayette eagle “is a symbol of French-American friendship, and there are only two places where it should reside, La Grange and Mount Vernon,” van de Weghe told the *New York Times*. In turn James C. Rees, executive director of George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens in Virginia, responded that while bidding on the object was beyond the means of Mount Vernon, he would be “honored to display the medal for a week or a year or 10 years, whatever they would agree to.”

Executive Director Jack Warren and Emily Schulz, the Society’s curator, traveled to New York in September to examine the piece at the invitation of Sotheby’s, and the Society provided information for the formal printed catalogue. The Society was well represented at the sale by President General Forrest Pragoff, Treasurer General Jonathan Woods, Development Committee chairman Frank Price and several other members. Having prior knowledge of the significant interest of a French institution, the ultimate sale to the Chambrun Foundation did not come as a surprise to the Society members present.

A condition report issued by Sotheby’s describes the badge in exquisite detail: a left-facing spread eagle with down-swept wings and legs played, all encircled by an oval crown or wreath of laurel leaves and berries. The leaves were originally highlighted with green enamel, but most of the enamel has been lost to wear. Crossed ribands bind the wreath at the bottom, and overflowing cornucopias at the top form the loop of the hanger, a gold ring of two interwoven tresses. Eagle, wreath and hanger are all made of “chased” gold, a technique that involves tooling the gold to create a high-relief decoration.

Circumscribing an oval medallion or shield on the eagle’s obverse chest is an abbreviation of the Society’s Latin motto *Omnia Relinquit Servare Republicam*—“He abandons everything to serve his country”—in gold letters set in enamel of deep cobalt blue. In the center, two Roman senators present a sword to Cincinnatus, who leans upon his plow. The eagle’s head faces right when the badge is reversed. An abbreviated *Virtutis Præmium Societas Cincinnatorum Instituta A.D. 1783*, also set in gold and blue and found around the medallion’s reverse, translates “Reward [of] valor; The Society of the Cincinnati; Founded A.D. 1783.” In the center Cincinnatus has returned to his plow. His cottage is to the left, and a rising sun illuminates from the right. Red enamel forms the background sky, while green enamel forms the earth on both sides of the medallion.

“Giving it up will be a loss. We’ve been proud to have it in our home, but it is too important to be seen only by one family.”

—Arnaud Meunier du Houssoy, Lafayette’s great-great-grandson, on the decision to sell the Washington-Lafayette eagle at auction

The eagle is suspended from the original but faded sky blue ribbon edged with white piping. A gold buttonhole loop is attached at the top. The ribbon bears evidence of pinholes where a rosette, seen in the portrait of Lafayette wearing it, was once attached.

The badge measures 1 1/2 inches by 1 1/8 inches (38 mm by 26 mm). The total length with ribbon and clasp is 5 1/2 inches (140 mm). Ron Fischer, a recognized expert in the field of orders and decorations observed that the ribbon and double-trumpet buttonhole suspender is “unique to original 1784 badges.”

The eagle is complemented by a red morocco leather presentation box, which measures 2 5/8 inches by 2 1/8 inches by 3/4 inches (65 mm by 53 mm by 19 mm). The box top’s gilt-tooled border contains the three-lined gilded inscription “Washington’s Cincinnati Badge.” The box is lined in white silk with white velvet support. A single hook clasp at the foot latches together the box’s top and bottom halves.

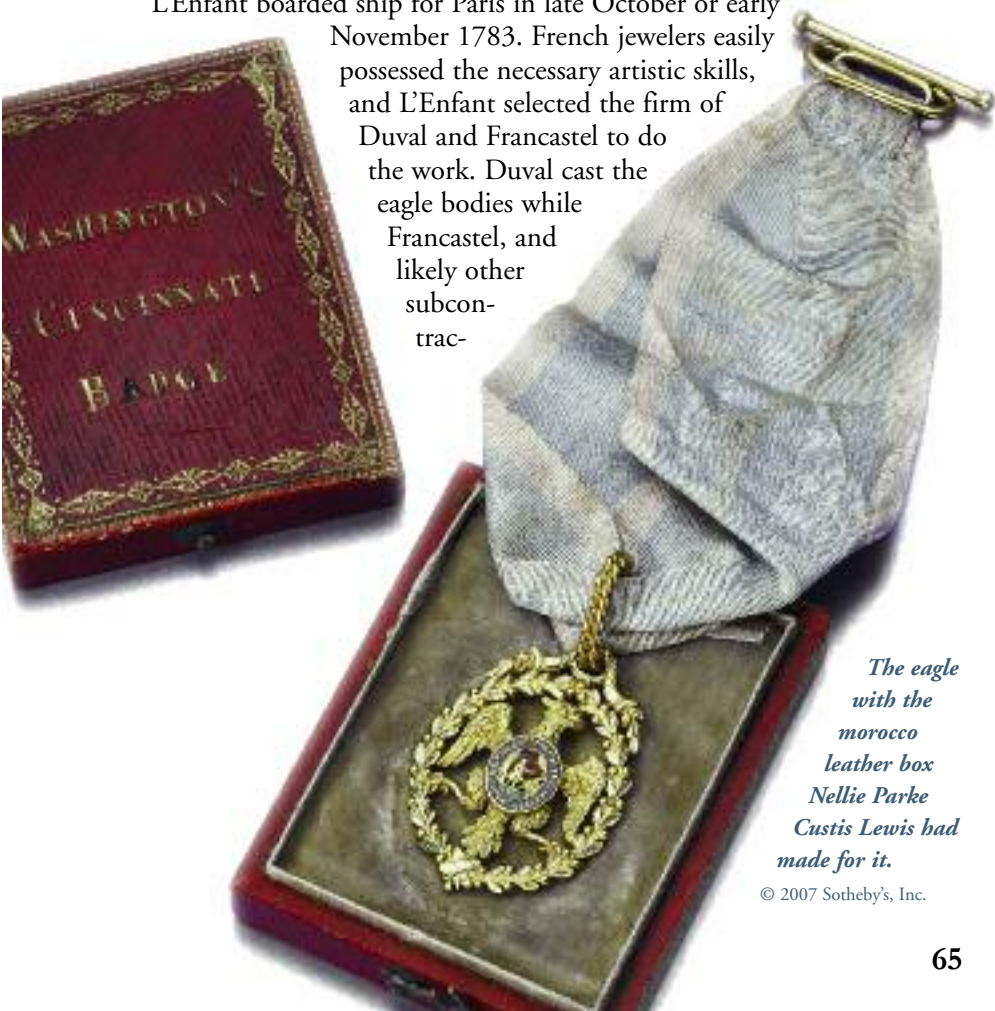
The concept of a hereditary badge for Continental officers predates the Society of the Cincinnati and was the vision of Maj. Gen. Henry Knox. The Society’s Institution provides a detailed description of the badge: “The Society shall have an Order, by which its members shall be known and distinguished, which shall be a medal of gold, of a proper size to receive the emblems, and suspended by a deep blue riband two inches wide, edged with white, descriptive of the union of France and America....” Intricate scenes honoring Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, a Roman nobleman of the fifth century B.C., are proscribed. On the obverse Cincinnatus is called away to repel an invader; on the reverse Cincinnatus, having eschewed political power, has returned to his plow.

Distinguished French engineer Maj. Pierre Charles L’Enfant, later famous for his plan of the District of Columbia, suggested that the design for the badge should, unlike a medal awarded for a specific act, service or skill and not intended for wear, follow the model of European orders, which were worn to symbolize high station and long distinguished service. L’Enfant designed an eagle of gold with the design of Knox’s

medal, simplified and miniaturized, placed on the eagle's breast.

George Washington, the first president general of the Society, ordered eight of the eagles—seven of the regular type and one “finished in a masterly manner but ornamented in an elegant, tho’ not costly Stile.” Washington intended for this eagle to be worn on “extra occasions,” or perhaps to serve as his badge of office during his tenure as president general. Though he did specify “not costly,” Washington correctly anticipated that a more decorative badge would be expensive compared to L’Enfant’s proposed design. Sending the major to France credentialed to conduct the business of the Society, Washington advanced L’Enfant an additional seventy-five dollars—triple the expected cost of the original design, which had been budgeted at twenty-five dollars apiece.

L’Enfant boarded ship for Paris in late October or early November 1783. French jewelers easily possessed the necessary artistic skills, and L’Enfant selected the firm of Duval and Francastel to do the work. Duval cast the eagle bodies while Francastel, and likely other subcontract-



*The eagle
with the
morocco
leather box
Nellie Parke
Custis Lewis had
made for it.*

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The Daveis-Lafayette eagle, ca. 1832, was commissioned by Charles Stewart Daveis (Mass.) after he saw the Washington-Lafayette eagle in Paris. The two eagles are similar, but distinctly different.

Collections of The Society of the Cincinnati. Gift of the estate of Mabel S. Daveis, 1950. Photograph by Olive Rosen.

tors, finished the details. Because of the small size of the medallion on the eagle's breast, French metalsmiths and jewelers exercised a degree of artistic license by abbreviating the Latin mottos on the obverse and reverse. The same is true with regards to Knox's designs for the depicted scenes of Cincinnatus. The modifications made by Duval and Francastel to L'Enfant's original design produced the first eagles for the Society. Simplification occurred, and variation seems to exist among eagles turned out by different artisans. The medallion of Washington's special eagle was not exempt from pattern variation, as a close examination reveals.

L'Enfant returned to Philadelphia in May 1784 with eagles for Washington and the other members. A meeting of the General Society was in session, and on May 10 Washington received his special eagle—the only one with a wreath around the entire body. The same day, however, to his immense surprise, Washington received a gift from Adm. Valerie d'Estaing on behalf of the officers of the French navy: an eagle set in a dazzling array of rose-cut diamonds and other precious gems. In a sense this "Diamond Eagle," which Washington henceforth wore as his personal badge, rendered Washington's special eagle obsolete on the day he received it. There is no evidence that he ever wore it. The Diamond Eagle subsequently became the official badge of office for successive presidents general of the Society.

The provenance of the Washington-Lafayette eagle is traceable from its original owner to the present time, mostly through a succession of inheritances in the Washington and Lafayette families. George Washington received the eagle on May 10, 1784. Upon his death in 1799 it passed to Martha Washington, who died in 1802. Upon her death it passed to Washington's step-granddaughter and adoptive daughter Eleanor "Nellie" Parke Custis Lewis, who had the red leather box made. Nellie gave the medal to the Marquis de Lafayette in 1824 during his triumphal thirteen-month, 6,000-mile tour of the United States. When Lafayette reached Charleston, S.C., in 1825, Charles Fraser painted his miniature, which clearly shows him wearing Washington's special eagle. The emblem was passed down through the Lafayette family until the

great-great-granddaughter of the marquis, Baronne Meunier du Houssoy, inherited it in 1972. Lafayette's great-great-great grandson Arnaud Meunier du Houssoy, in line to inherit the baronetcy, would also have inherited the medal. "Giving it up," he said, "will be a loss. We've been proud to have it in our home, but it is too important to be seen only by one family."

According to Sotheby's auction catalog, the Washington-Lafayette eagle has been exhibited at Chicago's great Columbian Exposition in 1892-93; at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1937, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution; and at the Archives Nationales in 1957 during an exhibition celebrating the bicentennial of Lafayette and again in 1976 during an exhibition celebrating America's bicentennial. The display of the eagle for six days before the December 11 auction was the first time it had been on view in the United States since its exhibition in Chicago in 1893.

As a matter of interest Myers, in his *Insignia* book, describes another badge, the Daveis-Lafayette eagle, as a copy of Washington's special eagle. Similar at a glance, this badge, which was commissioned by Charles Stewart Daveis, a member of the Massachusetts Society, is distinctly different. It is gold with enamel and also made in Paris (although by an unknown maker), but it could not be confused with Washington's eagle when held under close scrutiny. The Daveis-Lafayette eagle is owned by the Society and is part of the museum collections at Anderson House.

The display of the eagle for six days before the auction was the first time it had been on view in the United States since 1893.

Lafayette treasured Washington's special eagle. He kept it with other relics and memorabilia in his library until his death in 1834. He had lost his own eagle, along with many of his possessions, during the French Revolution. The Washington-Lafayette eagle thus became a precious artifact of two of the heroes of the American Revolution and The Society of the Cincinnati, representing their special relationship and the alliance between their two countries. "The special eagle," said Jack Warren, "is a reminder of the friendship between two men who continue to embody the idea of liberty."

Cordell Bragg is the great-great-great-great-great-great grandnephew of Lt. Josiah Kolb, Second Regiment, South Carolina Continental line.



